



Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service

An Internationally Accredited Public Safety Agency

NEWS ADVISORY

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Firing up the Grill? Keep these Safety Tips in Mind

It's that time of year again -- with summer fast approaching, residents will be firing up their grills and the last thing on many minds is probably safety, right? Well, it shouldn't be according to Fire Chief Richie Bowers. Firefighters responded to a serious grill fire this past weekend (photos attached) that remains under investigation with the homeowner was transported to a local hospital and currently recovering from 1st and 2nd degree burns sustained in the fire. Every year, thousands of homes catch fire because of improper use of grills and the Chief wants to remind residents that preparation is the key to staying safe when using grills this season.

Before you plan your next outdoor cookout, please review these safety tips:

- If you haven't used your grill in a while, give it a good spring cleaning. Scour the grate with a wire brush. Save future cleaning time by using a nonstick cooking spray to prevent food from sticking to the grill.
- Before using your grill for the first time this season, go online to check whether your grill has been recalled due to any dangerous defects.
- Position the grill in a well-ventilated, flat and level surface away from your house, overhangs, deck railings, tree branches, shrubbery and anything that can burn. Never use a grill indoors.
- Never leave a grill unattended – even for a minute – and supervise children and pets around the grill: declare three-foot “kid-free zone” around the grilling area.
- Wear short, close fitting or tightly rolled-up sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle over the grill and catch fire.

For Gas Grills:

Before grilling, follow the manufacturer's instructions for checking the connection to the cylinder. An easy way to do this is to tighten the connection, turn on the cylinder and then apply a soapy water solution around the connection. If bubbles appear, the connection is leaking. Turn the cylinder off, reconnect the cylinder and check again.

- Check grill hoses for cracking, corrosion, brittleness, holes and leaks. Make sure there are no sharp bends in the hose or tubing.
- If repairs are needed, do not attempt to do them yourself. Enlist a professional.
- Always keep propane gas containers upright.
- Always open the lid of a grill before igniting it.
- Regularly remove grease and fat buildup in trays below the grill so it cannot be ignited by a hot grill.
- If you smell gas, turn the grill off immediately and do not use it until it is repaired.
- Do not store tanks or other flammable materials near a grill, indoors or in a heated area such as a vehicle trunk. Propane tanks need to be stored in well-ventilated areas.

For Charcoal Grills:

- Use the proper starter fluid and store the can out of reach of children and away from heat sources.
- Never use any type of grill inside. Don't barbeque in the garage, even with the door open. Barbecues produce carbon monoxide, which can build up in an enclosed area. Carbon monoxide is invisible, colorless and tasteless -- but extremely dangerous. Instead, set up your grill in a corner of your deck or patio. Avoid grilling on a covered or enclosed porch or on top of anything that can catch on fire.
- Since charcoal produces CO fumes until the charcoal is completely extinguished, do not store the grill indoors with freshly used coals.

In Montgomery County, unless you live in a house, it is illegal to:

- Kindle or maintain charcoal burners and/or gas-fired grills on balconies or within 20 feet of any structure.
- Store liquid propane (LP) gas cylinders, within 20 feet of a multi-family residential building.

Remember, when cooking outside - **ALWAYS** open the hood before lighting the grill. **ALWAYS** keep the grill in a safe area away from children, pets and heavy people traffic where someone could bump into it. **NEVER** try to grill inside and remember, it is best to grill 20 feet away from anything that can burn. Have a safe summer!

Sources: NFPA, CPSC and the USFA



